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*Censur und Confiscation hebräischer Bücher im Kirchenstaate. Auf Grund der Inquisitions-Akten in der Vaticana und Vallicellana dargestellt von Dr. A. BERLINER. (Frankfurt a.M., 1891. 8vo.)*

IF the censorship of books deserves a history, Dr. Berliner has made a very good beginning, by giving the official lists of Hebrew books which were confiscated after searching for them in private houses at Rome, Urbino, Ancona, Sinigaglio, Pesaro, Lugo, Ferrara, and Avignon, from 1753 to 1754. In the introduction, Dr. Berliner gives a sketch of the decrees against the spread of heretical and suspicious books from 1542 to 1753. A complete history of this matter can only be made when all Hebrew books and MSS. of Italian origin in various libraries shall have been examined, and the names of the censors who gave permission to keep the books after having blotted out the so-called blasphemous passages shall have been noted, as well as the titles of the works. Will it ever be done? We doubt it.

A. N.

*Judenthum und Christenthum und ihre Zukunft. Von Dr. A. F. BERNER, Professor an der Universität Berlin (Leipzig, 1891).*

AN old friend in Berlin has sent me a pamphlet bearing the above title, with the suggestion that it should receive, as in his opinion it deserves, a sympathetic notice in the pages of this REVIEW. The importance of Professor Berner's pamphlet, or rather lecture—for it was originally delivered at the *Berliner Unions-Verein* on Jan. 30th, 1891—lies, I should imagine, less in its contents than in the fact of its authorship. For that a full-blown *ordentlicher* German professor should speak words of thoughtful recognition concerning modern Judaism, and even urge that modern Christianity would in one direction be the better for a Judaising purification, is, I fancy, a strange and unusual phenomenon.

For its own sake, too, the pamphlet is worth reading and noticing, as one more expression of the numberless religious voices which are now making themselves heard throughout the civilised world. That it is a reprint of a lecture perhaps accounts for its extraordinary arrangement. It consists of a number of comparatively isolated jottings, which form anything but an artistic whole. Of its thirty-six pages the first twenty-three are introductory to the last thirteen. But these twenty-three, though they are, of course, more or less connected with the essential thirteen, do not lead up to them so necessarily that one cannot well conceive their place being taken by another

twenty-three pages of cognate, but by no means identical import. This is their table of contents :—

We get first of all (1) a short characteristic of Judaism at the age of Christ. Then (2) the close connection of early Christianity with Judaism is briefly alluded to. Next (3) follow citations from M. Renan's views upon the two religions, culled first from an article of his in the *Revue des deux Mondes* of 1860, and then from two pamphlets of the year 1883. Professor Berner shows how in 1883 Judaism was more highly estimated by M. Renan than in 1860. We next have (4) a four-page jotting upon the way in which polytheistic accretions found their way into adolescent Christianity, and this is followed (5) by an equally brief account of the injury brought to the religion by scholasticism, with its endless *Dogmatik*. The section is concluded by the words :—

*Das ewige Christenthum ist die christliche Religion, nicht die Dogmatik* (p. 22).

In the penultimate introductory jotting (6) we hark back to the M. Renan of 1860, and a long passage is approvingly quoted concerning the abiding supremacy of the religious teaching of Jesus. Then, finally (7), it is asserted that the religious instinct is not quenched in Germany, as the war of Liberation and the war of 1870 sufficiently prove. Religion is an eternal need, and the idea of God a permanent necessity. A wave of atheism is possible, but it will not, and cannot, conquer in the end. Nevertheless, if atheism spread it may lead to catastrophes, which will show the world by sermons of blood that it cannot get on without God (p. 27). Thus the introductory portion of the lecture concludes with the statement : religion we must have, and the innermost sanctuary of religion is faith in God (p. 28).

What, then, is the religion of the future to be ? It must be an historical religion with its roots in the past. This position is maintained by Professor Berner in the following weighty paragraph (p. 28) :—

For a struggle in the living world's arena *historic* powers are necessary. It is impossible to bring down, as it were, a pure religion of reason out of the clouds on to the earth. The idea of a religion of pure reason is just as unreal an Utopia as was the idea of a purely rational State, which the old philosophy of natural law (*das alte Naturrecht*) wanted to substitute in place of the actually existing State.

Now, for the civilisation of the West there are two historical religions at the most, which need, or can, be taken into account in forecasting the religion of the future—Judaism and Christianity. Towards the progress of that phase of religion of which our author desires the triumph in times to come, Judaism has this one, but signal, advantage—its conception of God is purer, more monotheistic. The

function of Judaism in modern society is admirably and sympathetically indicated.

It is Judaism wherein the oldest and most powerful historic roots of monotheism lie hidden, and which has preserved monotheism most purely to the present hour. This oldest and strongest exponent of pure monotheism, to which the immortal merit pertains of having given to humanity the faith in One God, is especially calculated and called to take up the fight against the atheistic tendencies of to-day (p. 28).

Yet Judaism cannot hope to be the universal religion of the future. It is still only a national religion, and a national religion it must ever remain. Remove its national elements, and the religion will tumble to pieces. Attempted reform does not build up—it is mere disintegration. As many Jews themselves recognise, a denationalising reform can only lead to dissolution and decay.

The true and lasting reformed Judaism was, and still is, Christianity. In what form, then, can, or should, Christianity be preserved as the religion of the future? It must get back from Judaism the pure and simple Monotheism of the latter. Such a harmonising or combination (*Verschmelzung*) of the Christian conception of God with that of Judaism would not be hard (p. 31). For the Jewish conception of God is both high and deep, while many of the current oppositions between it and the conceptions of Christianity are exaggerated and false (p. 31, 32).

On the other hand, Christianity has in some respects undoubtedly gone beyond and excelled Judaism, and these religious superiorities must be maintained. It possesses (1) a higher, more spiritual and more catholic conception of the kingdom of God (p. 33), and (2) a higher conception of general morality; for Christian love and freedom may be fairly opposed to the law and bondage (*Gebundenheit*) of Judaism (p. 35).

So far, so good. But now comes the *crux* of the whole problem. What is to become of the faith in the person of Christ in the Judaised Christianity of the future? Professor Berner puts forward one suggested solution, only to reject it as inadequate and impossible. That solution would be to abandon the person of Christ—since the true lineaments of the historical Jesus can never be portrayed with complete exactitude—and to confine the Christian religion to the collective teaching attributed, more or less accurately, to Jesus in all the four Gospels indifferently (p. 37). But such a violent separation of Christianity from the person of Christ would be unsatisfying, and even impossible (p. 38). Yet men cannot wait till criticism has drawn the true picture of the historical Christ, and, moreover, as aforesaid, criticism will never be able to accomplish that task. What, then, is to be done? How is the antinomy to be got over? There

is no other possibility, replies Professor Berner, than, in spite of real or apparent contradictions, to cling and hold on to the Christ of the entire New Testament. We then get a Christ who is admittedly not a purely historical person. The figure is an ideal, partly *Wahrheit* and partly *Dichtung*; but, nevertheless, it is the Christ who as a fact lives in Christianity to-day, and who, if all dogma and dogmatism about him are wholly abandoned, will ever abide in the hearts of men as the archetype of humanity and the sun of the spiritual world.

So, this is the solution; yet, before it is summed up in a final sentence, there is interjected a significant N.B. :—

Concerning the belief in miracles, not a word: this phantom Science has scared away.

And now the conclusion :—

The religion of the future will be a Christianity freed from faith in miracles, strengthened in its conception of and belief in God by the reintroduction of Judaism, and purged and purified of all dogmatic scholasticism and polytheistic accretions.

This purified Christianity is to be the religion of all. Jews will embrace it as well as Gentiles. As things now are, Jews are right not to become Christians. It would not be desirable. Once more the author shows his intelligent sympathy with the Jewish position in words for which the Jews of Germany, and not of Germany only, must be frankly grateful to him :—

A conversion of the Jews to a Christianity still coloured by polytheism and disfigured by dogmatic scholasticism, is not only not to be wished, but even to be prevented. It would deprive the development of religion to higher purity and truth of its most active propelling force. The vocation of Judaism was, and still is, to maintain unchangingly pure monotheism. Only those Jews can be of service to us who refuse to enter upon any religious bargaining, and with unsundered conscience offer to the heathen and scholastic elements of Christianity an unshaken opposition (p. 30).

But when Christianity, following the example of Judaism, becomes monotheistic once more, how great would be Judaism's gain if it were to incorporate itself in such a purified Christianity!

It would then at last be able to escape from its mournful isolation, to free itself from the historic ghetto in which, since the Talmudic reaction, it has sat, and still sits, imprisoned (p. 31).

The above is a fair analysis—and should not a review, above all things, be an analysis?—of Professor Berner's interesting lecture. The questions which it raises and the answers which it suggests, are too large and complicated for criticism in this place and at this time. Professor Berner has certainly put his finger upon divers sore and tender spots in both Judaism and Christianity; yet one feels at once

how much easier and more convincing is the recital of their weaknesses than the attempted reconstruction of either religion, and the prophecy of their respective futures which follow upon the exposure. Would such a Christianity as the Professor sketches in his last dozen pages be teachable to children, and even if they learnt it from parents who had been real Christians once, would it not be a still more watered-down Christianity which would be taught by them to the next generation in its turn? Professor Berner's future Christianity seems a form of Unitarianism too Christian, on the one hand, for the Theistic left; not Christian enough, upon the other, for the Unitarian right. It is at any rate more than doubtful whether Jews could ever accept it, even if, as is not improbable, they come to recognise more liberally than now the advance which, in some elements of religion, has been effected by Christianity. How could people who have no inherited associations, no tender, youthful memories connected with the person of Christ, accept as the central conception of their religion an ideal figure who is confessedly composed both of *Dichtung* as well as *Wahrheit*, in proportions alike unknown and unknowable?

Meanwhile, no Jewish reviewer can take leave of Professor Berner's *brochure* without expressing to the author—a citizen of a land where the religious claims of Judaism are usually ignored or misunderstood—most grateful thanks for his keen recognition of the Jewish position and its rights in the present religious order—or chaos. The future of Judaism is, indeed, full of difficulty; yet it may possibly, under the varying conditions of the future, shape itself to a new and more potent life. Its denationalisation—which a liberal Jew, at any rate, must still regard as its only religious hope or chance for the days to come—is truly a problem of the utmost complexity, and with but a small logical display, it can easily be made to assume the aspect of self-contradiction and delusion. M. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, in his second article upon *Les Juifs et l'Antisémitisme*,<sup>1</sup> justly remarks, “Rarement l'histoire religieuse a présenté pareil problème.” And yet, as he goes on to say—

Bien téméraire, cependant, qui le dirait insoluble. Les religions ont un art à elles de passer à travers les antinomies; elles possèdent un instinct merveilleux de s'adapter aux lieux et aux temps. Le judaïsme, en particulier, est déjà sorti, sans y succomber, de deux ou trois crises qui semblaient lui devoir être mortelles. Il a une vitalité étrange; il en a donné tant de preuves qu'il serait en droit de nous en vouloir de paraître inquiet de son sort.

C. G. MONTEFIORE.

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<sup>1</sup> *Revue des Deux-Mondes*. 1<sup>er</sup> Mai, 1891, p. 198.